

**ABSTRACT**

5       The present invention is based on the unexpected discovery that the loss of cells in inflamed tissue during chronic inflammation leads to the influx and long-term re-population of the tissue with bone marrow derived stem cells, and that it is these stem cells that are the primary source of metaplasia and cancer. Accordingly, the invention relates to various methods, reagents and kits for prognosing, diagnosing, staging, monitoring, preventing and treating cancers, particularly cancers associated with chronic inflammation.